

Lunsford-French-Timmerman General Store  
Fourth building from the east on the block  
between Bond and Hudson streets

Plains  
Sumter County  
Georgia

HABS No. GA-2217

HABS  
GA,  
131-PLAIN,  
8-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### LUNSFORD-FRENCH-TIMMERMAN GENERAL STORE

HABS No. GA-2217

Location: Fourth building from the east in the commercial block between Bond and Hudson streets, Plains, Sumter County, Georgia.

USGS Plains Georgia Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates: Zone 16, E 746200 N 3546900.

Present Owner: Ernest and Betty June Turner.

Present Occupant/ Use: Turner's Hardware Store.

Significance: The buildings in this business block were erected between 1896-1916 as brick was used to gradually replace the original wood-frame structures. Situated southwest of the Plains Depot, this block was a business hub for the region before the Depression.

#### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

##### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1902.
2. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a chain of title to the land on which the building stands. Deed are from the Clerk's Office, Sumter County Courthouse, Americus, Georgia.
  - 1902 Deeds August 19-20, 1902, Deed Book FF, pages 58-59. Timmerman and Wise to J.E. French and a Mr. Forrester for \$125 a 30' x 100' lot, "ninth lot of said size running east, bounded on the west by the Plains Bank and on the east by the store lot of M.L. Hudson." The following day, the property was sold to the Plains Bank for \$2,066.
  - 1909 Deeds April 5, 1909, recorded October 29, 1909, Deed Book JJ, page 367. Lunsford, Timmerman and French Company to J.E. French for \$750. October 25, 1909, Deed Book JJ, page 367, J.E. French to R.S. Oliver for \$2,650.
  - 1938 Deed October 31, 1938, recorded October 4, 1938, Deed Book 22, page 218. Effie Oliver to Louise Price for \$900.
  - 1939 Deed January 27, 1939, recorded January 27, 1939, Deed Book 22, page 358. Louise Price sold a building known as the

Lunsford-French-Timmerman Store to Mrs. LaVert Moman of Schley County for \$1,250.

- 1965 Deed May 31, 1965, recorded June 1, 1965, Deed Book 79, pages 100-101. LaVert Moman to Judson Smith.
- 1966 Deed February 18, 1966, recorded February 25, 1966, Deed Book 83, page 514. Judson Smith to Fain Sutherland.
- 1973 Deed September 13, 1973, recorded September 18, 1973, Deed Book 132, page 219. Fain R. Sutherland to Ernest C. and Betty June Turner.

- 3. Original plans and construction: None have been located.
- 4. Alterations and additions: Wood boards were added under the front canopy in the 1970s.

B. Historical Context: An article issued by the Industrial Department of the Seaboard Air Line Railway described the firm of Lunsford, French and Timmerman as "a general merchandise business, carrying a large stock of ladies' and gent's furnishing goods, hardware, furniture, farm supplies, etc." The firm was incorporated in 1902 with John E. French as president, G. P. Lunsford as vice president, and J.W. Timmerman as secretary and treasurer.<sup>1</sup> The firm was listed as a general merchandiser in a business directory in 1909-10, but that must have been its last year of operation.<sup>2</sup> R.S. Oliver purchased the structure and leased it to William Alton Carter who opened the Plains Mercantile Company there in 1909.

Carter began his business career in 1905 at age 17, working at the Oliver-McDonald Company. Beth Walters remembers crowding around the window with other children at Christmastime to watch the store employees unpack all of the toys to be put on display.<sup>3</sup> Carter ran his business in this building until the 1930s when he moved down the street to the Oliver McDonald Building.

Hewlette Carlton then leased the building before it was sold in 1939 to LaVert Moman. She and her husband, H.B., came to Plains from Alabama in the late 1930s and opened the M & M Cash Store in the building, selling hardware and drygoods. Moman also purchased the adjacent store to the east in the early

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<sup>1</sup> Industrial Dept, S.A.L. Ry. Pamphlet, 1910s, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Young and Co.'s Business and Professional Directory, 1909-10, p. 499.

<sup>3</sup> Beth Walters, History of Plains, Georgia, 1885-1985, 1985, p. 57.

1940s and used it for storage.<sup>4</sup> When the Momans retired in 1965, they sold the store to Judson Smith, who sold it a year later to Ernest and Betty June Turner. They prided themselves in resisting the temptation to sell souvenirs during the Carter campaign and presidency, calling Turner's Hardware the only store that stayed the same. The Turners still own the store today, but it is only open a few hours each day. Although they refer to it as a hardware store, it also carries second-hand furniture and clothing.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This two-story vernacular building has a first-floor storefront with additional space on the second floor. Narrow and deep, the structure has modest, turn-of-the-century detailing.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This is a two-story 30'-0" x 100'-0" rectangular building with a four-bay facade.
2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Walls: Seven-course American bond on the south and west facades and the second story of the north facade. The east wall is shared with the adjacent building and the west wall has ten evenly spaced iron tie rods between the first and second floors and ten just below the roof. The first-floor storefront is canted with kickboards of narrow, vertical tongue-and-groove panels painted brown. The three bays of the first-floor storefront are divided by two chamfered wood piers. Brick pilasters form each side of the storefront and continue through the second story. A brick stringcourse follows the arches of the windows on the second story, above which is a recessed horizontal panel with a denticulated cornice and two diamond-shaped "vents."
4. Structural system, framing: Load-bearing brick.
5. Porches: A closed-eave canopy covers the sidewalk in front of the store. Vertical beaded wood panels form the side walls of the canopy, which is supported on four metal posts.

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<sup>4</sup> Jimmy Carter, 1988 interview.

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6. Chimneys: A small brick exterior chimney on the east wall served a coal- or wood-burning stove.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The wood front door has two-light glazing and a wood screen door. The door on the south/rear facade has been boarded over. It has a three-light transom under a brick segmental arch composed of two courses of rowlocks topped by a row of projecting headers.

b. Windows and shutters: The storefront has large four-light fixed display windows and two two-light fixed glazing in the canted entry. Above the display windows is a row of clerestory windows. A four-over-four-light sash is the only other window on the first floor and it is located east of the door on the south facade.

On the second story there are four windows on the front facade and three on the back. The back windows have been boarded up, but probably matched the two-over-two-light double-hung wood sash in front. A brick stringcourse follows the arches of the windows on the front, which are flanked by brick shoulders. The second-story rear windows have rowlock slip sills and are topped by a brick segmental arch made of a row of projecting headers over two courses of rowlocks.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The flat, rectangular roof has parapets and slopes slightly toward the back.

b. Cornice: A cornice of two projecting stretchers with concrete coping surrounds the roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. First floor: An approximately 28' x 98' rectangular room has a stairway about two-thirds of the way back on the east wall and a partitioned bathroom on the southwest corner.

b. Second floor: An approximately 28' x 98' rectangular room.

2. Stairways: A west-to-east run of eight risers leads to a small landing, and an eighteen-riser north-to-south run continues from the landing along the east wall to the second floor. A wood handrail with

rectangular balusters runs along the west side of the stairs and also on the second floor along the edge of the stairwell opening in the floor.

3. Flooring: The first and second stories feature tongue-and-groove boards running north to south.
  4. Wall and ceiling finish: Approximately 1" thick plaster covers the brick walls. Ceilings are beaded tongue-and-groove panels.
  5. Decorative features and trim: A crown molding articulates the wall and ceiling juncture and cornerblocks ornament the interior window casings.
  6. Hardware: A kerosene pump is located in the back of the store.
  7. Mechanical equipment:
    - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Large fans are attached to the front and rear windows.
    - b. Plumbing: There is a single, small sink on the back wall.
- D. Site: The building faces north onto Main Street and is the fourth in a row of eight buildings.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: None have been located.
- B. Early Views:

The building is visible in a ca. 1910 photograph of the business block that has been made into a postcard, available at Hugh Carter's Antique Store, Plains, Georgia.

A ca. 1925 photograph in Why Not The Best?, (p. 32) shows the entire block.

- C. Interviews:

Ernest Turner, current owner, interview by Elizabeth Barthold, July 25, 1989, Plains, Georgia.

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, videotaped interview by Ed Bearss, National Park Service, May 1988, Plains, Georgia.

- D. Bibliography:

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1. Primary and unpublished sources: Deed books are from the Clerk's Office, Sumter County Courthouse, Americus, Georgia.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Article issued by the Industrial Department of the Seaboard Air Line Railway, ca 1915-1920. p. 33.

Carter, Jimmy, Why Not the Best?, Nashville, Tenn: Broadman Press, 1975.

Walters, Beth, History of Plains, Georgia, 1885-1985, Americus, GA: Gammage Print Shop, 1985.

Young and Co.'s Business and Professional Directory, Georgia, 1909-10. p. 499.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Barthold  
Project Historian  
National Park Service  
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